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HUMAN RIGHTS HIGHLIGHTS

ARGENTINA: TIMERMAN RELEASE?

SOURCES: Buenos Aires 7838; 7881; 7917

(Entire text [REDACTED])

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(X) Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: () In Part (X) In Full

() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

Rumors about the impending expulsion of Jacobo Timerman have attained such currency, according to Embassy Buenos Aires, that his release is being taken for granted in Buenos Aires press and political circles. Press speculation concerning the fate of Argentina's best known political detainee was ignited by a reported Supreme Court decision of September 17 that ordered Timerman's release from house arrest. According to Embassy sources, the Court acted independently. However, the text of the decision has not been published, and government spokesmen have made no comment on the case. The executive's reaction to the Court's decision is expected after the September 26 Junta meeting.

INR Comment: The situation looks promising, but this is not the first spate of rumors concerning Timerman's release. Nor is it the first time that the Supreme Court has ruled his detention illegal; it did so in July 1978.

No evidence has ever been made public to substantiate charges that Timerman aided or encouraged subversion that Timerman was involved in political or economic subversion. His continued detention has seriously damaged the government's reputation at a time when the frequency of category one human rights violations has declined significantly. Despite these facts, Timerman has been held because he symbolizes for military hardliners what they hold responsible for Argentina's ills. While Timerman was not a terrorist,

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(and justified)

per se, his detractors believe that he encouraged terrorism through his journalism, associated with those who financed terrorism (Graiver, et. al.), and participated in a variety of corrupt business practices. That he is a Jew ~~and can be arrogant~~ has compounded his problem with anti-Semitic military officers, *as he has the tendency to be arrogant.*

The fact that so much is suspected in Timerman's case and so little is proven seems only to be regarded ~~as~~ as evidence that he is very clever and , therefore, all the more dangerous. Given this attitude, those like Brig. Gen. Camps, who directed the original investigation of Timerman's affairs, are irrational about the case. If moderate officers are able to gain Timerman's release despite ~~the~~ Camps and ~~these~~ others like him, it will be a significant accomplishment.

INR/RAR: J. Buchanan

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